



INTERIM GUIDELINES FOR RESPONDING TO SUSPICIOUS MAIL, PARCELS OR SUBSTANCES INVOLVING A POSSIBLE BIOTERRORISM EVENT

UNOPENED PACKAGES THAT MAY CONTAIN SUSPICIOUS MATERIAL

- ? Conduct a **RISK ASSESSMENT** of the envelope/package for explosives or other risks to the handler.
- ? If the envelope/package presents no explosive or other risk, utilize appropriate safety precautions including necessary personal protective equipment (PPE), open the package and examine the contents.
 - ✍ Gloves (vinyl or nitrile recommended) should be used when handling the object.
 - ✍ A particulate respirator or mask suitable for tuberculosis protection also should be considered when handling the object .
- ? If no suspicious substance is found, disposition according to law enforcement procedures.
- ? If a suspicious substance is found:
 - ✍ Carefully place envelope/package in a plastic bag and seal it. Carefully place this object in another plastic bag for a double seal*.
- ? Notify the local public health unit.
- ? **Contact the North Department of Health at 800.472.2180 for consultation. Consultation is available 24-hours/7 days/week.**
- ? The North Dakota Highway Patrol will transport the object upon request of local law enforcement/fire department/HAZMAT for testing*.
- ? **Note: The North Dakota Department of Health must be consulted before any sample is forwarded for testing. A control number will be assigned to the object by the Department of Health for tracking purposes.**

OPENED PACKAGES THAT CONTAIN SUSPICIOUS MATERIAL

- ? Conduct a **RISK ASSESSMENT** of the envelope/package for explosives or other risks to the handler.
- ? If no other risk is evident, utilize appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE)
 - ✍ Carefully place envelope/package in a plastic bag and seal it. Carefully place this object in another plastic bag for a double seal*.
 - ✍ Gloves (vinyl or nitrile recommended) should be used when handling the object.
 - ✍ A particulate respirator mask suitable for tuberculosis protection should be considered when handling the object .
- ? Notify the local public health unit.
- ? **Contact the North Department of Health at 800-472-2180 for consultation. Consultation is available 24-hours/7 days/week.**
- ? The North Dakota Highway Patrol will transport the object upon request of local law enforcement/fire department/HAZMAT for testing*.

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LABORATORY RESULTS

- ? Results of anthrax testing are usually available in 24 hours after the laboratory has processed the sample. The time period for available results will depend on when the laboratory receives the sample and the priority placed for testing.
- ? The laboratory will telephone results to the Division of Disease Control of the North Dakota Department of Health.
- ? As soon as the results are received, the Division of Disease Control will notify the Division of Emergency Management (DEM) and the local public health unit of the results.
 - ✍ DEM will notify Highway Patrol of the results.
 - ✍ Local public health will notify the sender where the sample originated, local law enforcement/fire department/HAZMAT and other persons who may have been in contact with the object.
- ? **Because the North Dakota Department of Health will contact those who need to know as soon as the test results are available, those involved are requested to refrain from calling for results.**

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

- ? When evaluating the suspicious package or object, consideration must be given to using the appropriate personal protective equipment. To date, there have been no credible incidents involving exposure to anthrax or other biological agents in North Dakota.
- ? At a minimum, the responder should wear gloves when handling and evaluating the suspicious object. Single-use vinyl or nitrile gloves should be the glove of choice.
- ? A particulate respirator or mask suitable for tuberculosis protection should be considered when handling the object⁴.
- ? Protective clothing such as disposable coveralls also may be considered.
- ? After evaluating the object, the responder should thoroughly wash their hands with soap and water.

Additional personal protective equipment may be recommended and used depending on the situation. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommendations issued October 25, 2001 are attached and also are available at:

www.bt.cdc.gov/DocumentsApp/Anthrax/Protective/10242001Protective.pdf

DECONTAMINATION

- ? If decontamination of the immediate area is necessary, a 1:10 bleach/water solution (1 part bleach/9 parts water) may be used. A 1:10 bleach/water solution is roughly equivalent to 2 cups of bleach/gallon of water. The contact time for the solution should be at least 10 minutes.

Additional information and guidance is available from the North Dakota Department of Health by calling 800.472.2180. Information also is available on the Department of Health web page (www.health.state.nd.us).

Footnotes

☞ Bioterrorism is a federal crime and the FBI has jurisdiction. However, the current FBI policy is that they will not respond until there is laboratory confirmation of an agent or other evidence of terrorism.

☞ Respirator examples include half-face N-95 or P-100 models. Individuals wearing respirators should be enrolled in a respirator protection program which should include medical certification, training and fit testing.

*Biological Agent Transport Kits are available at North Dakota Highway Patrol District Offices. These kits include a hard plastic sealable pail for transport, instructions, disposable gloves, a small plastic pail, biohazard bags, bleach wipes and chain of custody forms.

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